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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 29 October 2004, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:	Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe	(Myanmar)
later:	Mr. Droba (Vice-Chairman)	(Slovakia)
later:	Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe (Chairman)	(Myanmar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 22: Assistance in mine action (*continued*) (A/59/284 and Add.1; A/C.4/59/L.9)

1. **The Chairman** said that, in accordance with paragraphs 3 (c) and 3 (d) of the annex to resolution 58/316 on further measures for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, the Committee would have an interactive dialogue with the Secretariat on agenda item 22. In that connection, he introduced two representatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO): Mr. Martin Barber, Director of the Mine Action Service, and Mr. Patrick Cammaert, Military Adviser in DPKO.

2. **Mr. Barber** (Director of the Mine Action Service) said that there had been two distinct phases in mine action as a component of peacekeeping operations: the first, from 1990 to 1997; and the second, which had begun in 1999 with the deployment of the operation in Kosovo. In the early 1990s, as many armed conflicts were coming to an end, it had become clear that the global traffic in arms and landmines had left a destructive trail in many of the world's countries. When the personnel of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia had set about their work, they had found that many areas of the country were mined. Consequently, the mission had begun by training demining specialists from among the local staff. However, when the operation had been wound up in 1993, mine clearance in those areas had essentially ceased owing to a lack of support from both the national authorities and the international community. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had therefore begun to provide support for that work.

3. Likewise, in Mozambique, after the departure of peacekeepers, the local authorities had been unable to continue mine-clearance efforts, and UNDP had again had to provide assistance. A similar situation had arisen in Angola and in a number of other countries. An assessment of mine action conducted in 1996 had shown that there was no clear division of functions in respect of post-conflict mine clearance in the United Nations system. In 1997, functions in that area had been carried out by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and DPKO, with the Demining Unit in DPKO acting as coordinator. Subsequently, the Unit had been transformed into the Mine Action Service, which had been entrusted with the role of mine-action coordinator for the entire United Nations system. That new approach had been employed in the United Nations operation in Kosovo, and experience had shown that it produced positive results. The United Nations Office for Project Services was making a significant contribution to mine action as a partner of UNDP and national Governments. The new approach had also been used in carrying out demining in Ethiopia and Eritrea, south Lebanon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

4. Based on experience, two conclusions could be drawn: first, mines left after conflicts and unexploded ordnance had a devastating effect and impeded peacemaking, the provision of humanitarian assistance and reconstruction; and, second, mine action had a positive impact on peacebuilding and confidence-building measures. It should be noted that, when demining was undertaken within the framework of peacekeeping operations, the cost of such operations was significantly reduced because clearing roads of mines made it possible to deliver humanitarian supplies overland.

5. It was necessary to distinguish, in the context of mine clearance, between military or strategic demining and humanitarian demining. Military demining was mainly carried out in order to make safe passages across minefields for the conduct of military activities, while humanitarian demining was undertaken in order to clear mines from agricultural and other areas that might be used by the local population and by peacekeeping personnel. When carrying out mine-clearance operations, it was important to comply with international or national standards in that area so as to ensure that the work done was of the appropriate quality and that proper records were kept to indicate which specific sectors had been cleared. In November 2003, Angola, the President of the Security Council at that time, had organized a debate on mine action, which had resulted in the adoption of an extremely useful presidential statement. The statement had helped to ensure that mine clearance was taken into account in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and the Council had called on troop-contributing countries to train selected personnel to demine in accordance with international standards in that area.

6. **Mr. Cammaert** (Military Adviser in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations) said that, since his very first mission, the United Nations operation in Cambodia, he had invariably faced the

problem of mines. When he had been appointed Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), he had again been confronted with the problem of mines and unexploded ordnance. The military contingent in that mission had had its own demining equipment, while a centre had been established within the civilian component to coordinate the activities of the various humanitarian organizations that were also carrying out mine clearance. The mission leadership had rapidly concluded that it would be advisable to combine the military and civilian capacity in order to enhance mine action. Accordingly, the military demining specialists had been attached to the civilian unit coordinating the activities of the international humanitarian organizations carrying out mine clearance. The military and civilian specialists had jointly determined their priorities and strategy, although the civilian component had been in overall charge. Impressive results had been achieved, and UNMEE had become a good example of how effectively military and civilian components could cooperate in addressing common tasks.

7. **The Chairman** thanked Mr. Barber and Mr. Cammaert for their introductory statements and invited delegates to put questions to them. Since there were no questions, he suggested that the members of the Committee should resume their general debate on agenda item 22.

8. **Ms. Bzkljăcič** (Croatia) said that her delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of the Netherlands on behalf of the European Union. Croatia was an active participant in mine action, was well aware of the true scope and nature of mine-related problems and recognized the vital importance of timely and appropriate mine-action measures and programmes to successfully address all aspects of those problems. Croatia had developed its own expertise in that field and stood ready to share it with all mine-affected countries. It also paid great attention to full rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for landmine survivors.

9. Her Government attached great importance to expanding education and training for all actors in the demining process. Recently, it had established a number of education and training centres for activities in that field. In the period 1998-2003, it had allocated 90 million euros from its budget for demining, which had covered 85 per cent of the cost of such activities in Croatia. She thanked the various donors that had contributed the remaining 15 per cent of the funds and expressed the hope that the final goal of having a mine-free country would be achieved by 2009.

10. Croatia stood ready to contribute to efforts to rid Europe of mines. She noted with satisfaction that all countries in South-East Europe, as parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Mine Ban Convention), were actively participating in mine action and had taken ownership of the mine-action structures, which they were funding either fully or partially. Stronger assistance by donors could expedite the completion of the demining process in the region. In that context, her Government particularly encouraged the use of matching-fund mechanisms.

11. **Mr. Jiang** Yingfeng (China) said that his Government attached great importance to addressing humanitarian problems caused by the presence and use of anti-personnel mines. It believed that it was necessary to ensure the universality and unconditional application of Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Types of Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons), which China had ratified and was actively implementing. It had noted with satisfaction the plans of the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention concerning the complete prohibition of anti-personnel mines. China supported the goals and objectives of the Mine Ban Convention and, as an active participant in international mine action, was doing what it could to assist many countries in that area, including organizing national seminars on mine clearance. It contributed to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and had joined the Mine Action Support Group based in New York.

12. In April 2004, China had been one of the organizers of an international workshop on humanitarian demining, unexploded ordnance clearance technologies and cooperation in those fields, which had laid a solid foundation for broadening cooperation and exchanging experience and had given impetus to the development of international cooperation and mine-action assistance. His Government attached great importance to expanding exchanges and cooperation with the States parties to the Mine Ban Convention. China had participated, as

an observer, in the work of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention and intended to take part, as an observer, in the Nairobi Summit on a Mine Free World. Joint international mine action provided an excellent opportunity to broaden exchanges and cooperation on the basis of mutual respect, to find mutually acceptable solutions and to overcome differences and would facilitate progress in that area. His Government stood ready to make its contribution to humanitarian efforts to address the effects of mines.

13. **Ms. Kahlon** (Pakistan) said that almost 40 per cent of the States Members of the United Nations were faced in one form or another with the problem of indiscriminate and irresponsible use of landmines, which remained the main factor in the loss of innocent civilian lives during and after conflicts. In neighbouring Afghanistan, two decades of foreign occupation and internecine war had left the entire territory infested with anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance. Hundreds of Afghan mine victims were being treated and provided with artificial limbs in Pakistani hospitals.

14. Pakistan, which was the largest troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, had actively participated in demining operations in a range of countries and stood ready to provide training facilities for mine-affected countries. It was committed to ensuring the highest standards of responsibility in the use of landmines when military necessity so dictated and was fully implementing Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. It was proud of the fact that all minefields in its territory had been cleared.

15. Greater international awareness of the need to address the problems posed by landmines and unexploded ordnance was encouraging. The report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action (A/59/284) and the revised United Nations mine-action strategy for the period 2001-2005, as contained in document A/58/260/Add.1, demonstrated the progress made in improving the assessment of the situation in mine-affected countries, increasing capacity to respond to emergencies, mobilizing resources and pursuing efforts to build mine-action capacity. However, continued efforts were needed in four areas. First, the United Nations Mine Action Service must focus on raising awareness through its programmes of the danger posed by mines and on sensitizing the populations in donor countries to the need to remain engaged in mine-action activities. Second, national authorities must participate more actively in mine-action programmes by providing equipment and training to local people. Third, modern demining technologies must be made available to mine-affected countries. Fourth, demining operations must be supplemented by rehabilitation programmes to provide mine victims with artificial limbs and job opportunities.

16. **Mr. Pavlyshyn** (Ukraine) said that his delegation regarded mine action as an integral component of United Nations humanitarian and development activities. The Organization had a significant role to play in the field of assistance in mine action. His delegation acknowledged the progress described in the report of the Secretary-General (A/59/284) and supported the recommendations contained therein. It favoured giving more detailed consideration to the provision of additional technical and financial assistance, not only for mine clearance, but also for stockpile destruction and unexploded ordnance disposal in countries where the presence of mines constituted a serious obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction and development. It wished to call on the United Nations to continue to foster relevant national capacity-building and would pursue that issue with a view to the preparation of a resolution thereon at the General Assembly's sixtieth session.

17. His delegation recognized the key role of the United Nations Mine Action Service. The basic parameters of assistance in mine action must be determined by the needs of mine-affected communities. Mine clearance proper must not deflect attention from other aspects of mine action, for example, victim assistance. Timely mobilization of resources from donors was especially important in that regard.

18. His delegation was convinced of the need to pursue the goals of the Mine Ban Convention gradually, while, at the same time, ensuring that the greatest possible number of States became parties to Amended Protocol II and Protocol V to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and would continue to support efforts to that end.

19. Ukraine had extensive experience of modern demining technologies, and its advanced logistical base allowed it to train highly skilled specialists in a short period. It stood ready to provide technical support to

and share its experience with United Nations missions in various countries. Ukraine's participation in demining activities was a clear demonstration of its commitment to fulfil its international obligations.

20. **Mr. Kittikhoun** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) expressed appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and informative report on United Nations activities to implement the strategic goals and objectives of the revised United Nations mine-action strategy for the period 2001-2005. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was the most heavily bombed nation in the world per capita. During the armed conflicts in Indochina, from 1964 to 1973, more than 2 million tons of ordnance had been dropped on the country, and up to 30 per cent had not detonated on impact. In addition, a large number of the bombs dropped on the country had been cluster bombs, which acted as a type of anti-personnel mine. According to a socio-economic impact survey, over 87,000 square kilometres of the country's territory were contaminated with unexploded ordnance. Since 1975, more than 11,000 persons had become casualties of mines and other ordnance.

21. In order to address that problem, in 1996, a national unexploded ordnance programme had been established with a view to reducing the number of civilian casualties and clearing areas of mines so that they were again suitable for agriculture and development activities. The programme consisted of the following components: community awareness, training and capacity-building, survey and clearance. Since the programme's inception, over 35,000 hectares of land had been cleared, more tha 1 million people had been educated about the dangers of unexploded ordnance and some 1,000 Lao nationals had been trained in mine-clearance work. According to programme data, it would take at least 25 years to clear unexploded ordnance from priority agricultural and development sites. The main channel for contributions to the programme was its trust fund, which was supported and administered by UNDP. Such contributions had been received from UNDP itself and, in addition, from the United Nations Children's Fund, the European Union, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, the United States of America and other countries.

22. Unexploded ordnance and landmines continued to threaten populations in many regions around the world. For many countries, particularly developing countries, their presence constituted a major obstacle to socio-economic development. However, his delegation believed that that problem would be resolved through concerted efforts in cooperation with the United Nations as the focal point for mine action.

23. **Ms. Soni** (Canada) said that landmines and other explosive remnants of war continued to litter hundreds of square kilometres of territory worldwide, hindering economic development and the development of infrastructure, rendering agricultural land useless and injuring or killing 15,000 to 20,000 people every year. For all its 143 States Parties, the Ottawa Convention provided the legal basis for effective action against the dangers of anti-personnel landmines. The role of the United Nations in mine action remained absolutely central. Canada continued to support the activities of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in its coordinating role and in assessing the threat of anti-personnel landmines throughout the world.

24. Canada urged all Member States to sign and fully implement the Ottawa Convention. In 2002, it had renewed the Canadian Landmine Fund for a further five years, with a contribution of US$ 72 million. A further US$ 42 million had been received from the Canadian International Development Agency. That approach recognized that anti-personnel mines presented not only a threat to peace and mutual confidence in many regions, but also a critical barrier to development in many parts of the world.

25. The First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention offered a crucial opportunity to increase global public consciousness of issues connected with landmines and for Governments to demonstrate the political will and necessary resource commitments. Canada took great satisfaction in the priority given by the United Nations and individual Member States to mine action as an important component of security. It was disappointed, however, that in 2004 Member States had been unable to agree on the text of a resolution on assistance in mine action. It hoped nevertheless that the matter would be raised again and was encouraged to see overwhelming support from the international community, and especially the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, for the activities of UNMAS.

26. **Mr. Sawford** (Australia) said he was pleased to note that more than three quarters of the world's nations had acceded to the Ottawa Convention.

Universalization of the Convention was a primary goal for his Government, which intended to continue working closely with other parties to encourage States which were not parties to it to take steps towards accession. Australia continued to urge those nations to commit themselves to ridding the world of anti-personnel mines. His delegation was disappointed that the Member States had failed to reach a consensus on a draft mine action resolution at the current session. It hoped for positive results from the First Review Conference of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, in late November 2004, and hoped that the action plan for 2005-2009 would be adopted.

27. Since January 1996, the Australian Government had expended 97 million Australian dollars on mine action activities, and would fully meet its pledge of 100 million Australian dollars to mine action activities for the decade 1996-2005. Australia's mine action assistance had focused on building indigenous capacity for mine clearance, assisting mine victims and promoting mine awareness. Most of Australia's humanitarian demining activity was focused on countries in the Asia-Pacific region, many of which suffered the highest burden of mines and unexploded ordnance in the world. In 2003-2004, Australia had contributed 7.5 million Australian dollars to mine-action programmes.

28. Australia remained firmly committed to the goal of a comprehensive solution to the global anti-personnel mine problem. As Co-chair of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration, Australia would seek to promote awareness and encourage support for activities that addressed the needs of victims. In addition, it would continue to support international action to halt the use of anti-personnel mines through promoting universalization and effective implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

29. **Mr. Issa** (Egypt) said that Egypt took a keen interest in mine action. Its territory contained mines and unexploded ordnance from the Second World War which prevented the country's full agricultural potential from being fulfilled and endangered the population. Mines had killed more than 8,000 people, mainly women and children. The Egyptian authorities had used whatever financial resources were available on a plan to clear the affected areas of mines. Implementing that plan had been a heavy technical and financial burden. The States which had conducted military operations in Egypt during the Second World War and which had planted the mines should provide mine-clearance assistance.

30. Egypt worked with the United Nations on mine clearance. The United Nations had dispatched a mission there in February 2002 to assess the situation. The comprehensive report drawn up on completion of the mission contained practical steps to eliminate the problem. Regrettably, donor countries imposed a number of conditions when assigning resources to assist with mine clearance. The countries which had laid mines should be held legally and politically accountable. Although Egypt fully shared the humanitarian aims of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, it had explained in various forums on various occasions that it had a number of reservations.

31. His delegation joined others in regretting that, in 2004, no consensus had been reached on a draft resolution such as the one adopted every year by consensus. The lack of consensus had been caused by serious disagreements between the Member States, mainly regarding the ongoing review of the Organization's mine-action policies and the development of an action strategy for 2006-2007. Responsibility for developing the Organization's policy lay with the Member States, while the Secretariat was responsible for implementing it. That approach must be strictly followed, taking into account the Organization's action strategy and budget.

32. **Mr. Mansour** (Yemen) said that United Nations mine action would help to establish security and stability throughout the world and ease the heavy burden suffered by many countries — including Yemen — in whose territories landmines had been laid, causing many casualties. His Government attached great importance to action to destroy stockpiles of landmines and to clear mines from many areas of its territory. To that end, it had established a specialized National Committee, which had from the outset worked closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and friendly countries, including the United States of America and the States members of the European Union. Thanks to the efforts of the National Committee, 66,674 landmines had been destroyed and victims of mines had been provided with medical and rehabilitation assistance. Cooperation

between the United Nations, its Member States and countries which were directly affected by mines and unexploded ordnance would help to establish stability and security throughout the world.

33. **Mr. Heaton** (New Zealand) said that New Zealand was seeking improved integration and coordination in mine action that incorporated a development perspective so that benefits would be sustained and would meet the needs of affected communities, help to reduce poverty and strengthen human rights.

34. The Organization's partners had made commitments to integrate a development perspective into mine action in planning and implementing peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. Coordination and collaboration was of paramount importance in mine action, and UNMAS played a critical role in that process. The willingness of UNMAS to be transparent with the development of current and future mine action strategy was to be commended. New Zealand supported mine action by providing mine-clearance personnel and by supporting non-governmental organizations involved in mine-clearance and mine-awareness programmes. It wished to express its appreciation to the non-governmental organizations involved in mine-clearance programmes and to the International Committee of the Red Cross, which was active in that field.

35. The Ottawa Convention was a successful and constructive forum for mine action. New Zealand called on those States which were not parties to the Convention to respect the norms regarding the use of anti-personnel mines and to accede to the Convention without delay. It strongly supported the work under way on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Protocol V to that Convention recognized that parties to a conflict must take responsibility for the munitions they had deployed and take measures to reduce the risk of harm to civilians. New Zealand was currently working towards ratification of that Protocol.

36. It was disappointing that no consensus had been achieved on a draft resolution in 2004. His delegation was confident that UNMAS would keep Member States advised of developments, especially the development of the new strategy for 2006-2010. The objective was to make the world a safer place, and one free of mines; it was therefore critical that the collective efforts of the United Nations, Governments and civil society should be constructive and effective in addressing mine-action goals.

37. **Ms. Moore** (United States of America) said that, recognizing the importance of mine action, the United States of America had been the world's leading donor in that area over the past decade, pursuing its commitment to the eradication of persistent landmines and explosive remnants of war which threatened civilian populations or denied them access to their land, homes, markets, schools, and hospitals. It would continue to assist countries in need and help them in their fight against the humanitarian threats posed by persistent landmines.

38. Her delegation had worked hard to overcome differences pertaining to Conventions and Treaties, in order to continue sending the message that humanitarian mine action was important and necessary. Unfortunately, in 2004, those efforts had not received the required response. Across the board, particularly in the case of United Nations agencies involved in mine action, there was increased cooperation, coordination and transparency between the United Nations, Member States and relevant organizations.

39. **Ms. Holguín** (Colombia) said that, in depositing its instrument of ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Colombia had demonstrated its firm commitment to the elimination of mines. It had so far destroyed 20,000 mines, retaining only 986 for training military personnel, and it had destroyed all equipment for the manufacture of anti-personnel mines. The Government had brought into operation an anti-personnel mine information system and included in its development plan provisions for the establishment and implementation of a national mine-action plan. Results had been achieved thanks to cooperation and technical assistance from international institutions such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union and from the Governments of Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

40. In the past year, 554 Colombians had fallen victim to landmines planted by terrorists; in 2003 members of the Colombian armed forces had cleared 705 minefields and destroyed 70 tons of explosives and

6,900 explosive devices. Colombia, which was under constant threat from terrorism, was committed to working for the complete elimination of anti-personnel mines. Armed groups continued to lay mines in Colombian territory, preventing the use of agricultural land and the exploitation of natural resources. The Colombian Government thanked those countries, organizations and institutions which had helped it with mine action and supported the initiative for an international mine awareness day.

41. **Mr. Calderón** (Ecuador) said that his delegation was disappointed that, for the first time, no consensus had been reached on a draft resolution regarding agenda item 22, "Assistance in mine action". It had been proposed that the Member States should recognize in the draft resolution the important political significance of action by countries which, in the wake of military conflict, had been able to develop coordinated mine-action programmes to establish a climate of mutual trust, thus helping to consolidate peace and promote economic development. One example was the effort made by Ecuador and Peru and he called on donor countries to lend effective and sustained support to such efforts.

42. The draft resolution had reflected the decisions taken at the Quito regional conference. Mine action was not simply a question of disarmament; it seriously affected the development process. Issues connected with anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war must also be examined. The international community must not only support mine clearance, but also establish development projects to help to rehabilitate the cleared areas and encourage their inhabitants to return. Ecuador and Peru were the only countries in the region which were implementing programmes of action under the Comprehensive Action against Anti-Personnel Mines (AICMA) of the Organization of American States. He thanked those countries and organizations which had not just enabled its mine-clearance process to advance, but had also provided assistance and support for bilateral cooperation in order to help the two countries to pursue development on the basis of trust and mutual respect. His delegation urged donors to support developing countries in their mine action.

43. Ecuador attached particular importance to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) and was pleased to announce that, in implementation of the Convention, it had destroyed all its stockpile of anti-personnel mines. It appealed to all States which had not yet done so to accede to the Convention in the near future.

44. **Mr. Martins** (Angola) said that his Government viewed the clearance from its territory of over 7 million landmines as a priority goal which must be attained as a precondition for post-conflict reconstruction. It had therefore acted to set up new structures — including the Committee for Demining and Humanitarian Assistance — to coordinate all mine action.

45. His delegation viewed with interest the idea of establishing a forum for mine-affected States which would provide an opportunity to discuss with donors a partnership strategy for mine action and for ridding such countries, and the world, of the scourge of landmines. It called for an increase in contributions to mine action, as such action was not only a humanitarian issue, but also a development issue, especially in rural areas. His delegation hoped that the current debate would contribute to the forthcoming Nairobi Summit and to the attainment of the goals of the Ottawa Convention.

46. **Mr. Aqa** (United Nations Development Programme), echoing the statement made by Mr. Annabi, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, at the previous meeting, said he agreed that mine-affected States must be at the centre of mine action and that mine action was not just a humanitarian issue, but also a development issue. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) helped mine-affected Member States to develop their own mine-action capacities, taking a long-term, sustainable social and economic view of the matter. Working with 27 mine-affected States throughout the world, UNDP was establishing mine-action centres and institutions and providing mine-action training for mid-level and senior-level team leaders. It was also helping to establish South-South exchange programmes for experts, in order to promote best practices in mine action. States were also receiving help with the preparation of mine-action legislation and with meeting treaty obligations.

47. UNDP was actively assisting in the implementation of the completion initiative, geared towards demining in those countries where the problem

could be addressed in a short period of time and it encouraged all countries to support that process. In the opinion of UNDP, mine action was a vital component of development which could genuinely improve living conditions for people in many countries and societies. It would try to contribute as effectively as possible to mine action, and, with that in mind, the Administrator of UNDP would be taking part in the forthcoming Nairobi Summit to review the Ottawa Convention.

48. **Mr. Barber** (Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service) thanked Member States for the good reception they had given to the report of the Secretary-General and the five-year mine-action strategy, which would undoubtedly improve coordination of mine action within the United Nations system. He was also pleased that many mine-affected States had expressed their readiness to implement the strategy, relying partly on their own resources. Many countries which had not acceded to the Ottawa Convention had declared their support for its humanitarian goals and, in a few cases, their intention to accede to the Convention in the future. Many speakers had expressed the need for assistance for the increasing number of victims of accidents caused by mines and unexploded ordnance.

49. He had noted the view of some delegations that mine action could play an important role in peacebuilding and confidence-building efforts. Many references had been made to the need to involve civil society in mine action and, in that connection, to increase funding for such activities, with emphasis on the link between mine action and development. Development and reconstruction programmes must accordingly provide for mine action and for mine-awareness activities targeted at the population.

50. **Mr. Issa** (Egypt) said that, in his delegation's view, the Director of UNMAS had described his own understanding of the Committee's deliberations on the agenda item under consideration. However, the mandate of UNMAS could come only from the decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly.

51. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to take up draft decision A/C.4/59/L.9 on assistance in mine action.

52. *It was so decided.*

Draft decision A/C.4/59/L.9 on mine action

53. **Mr. Callenbach** (Netherlands), introducing draft decision A/C.4/59/L.9, said that his delegation was disappointed that, as coordinator of the consultations on the agenda item, it had been unable to establish a consensus on some aspects of the draft resolution that had been discussed. Some of the wording had been unacceptable to certain parties, and it had therefore been decided to propose a draft decision by which the Committee would defer consideration of the item to the following year.

54. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat had informed him that the draft decision in question had no programme budget implications.

55. **Mr. Issa** (Egypt) said that, in his view, the source of the disagreement which had prevented the members of the Committee from reaching a consensus on the draft resolution had been a divergence of opinion on the roles of the Member States and the Secretariat in determining strategies and policies. It was his delegation's understanding that, under the Charter of the United Nations, it was the prerogative of the Member States to determine tasks and strategies, and that the Secretariat was called upon to implement those decisions, not vice versa. His delegation supported the draft decision put forward by the coordinator.

56. *Draft decision A/C.4/59/L.9 was adopted without a vote.*

Agenda item 109: Programme planning

Programme 23: Public information

57. **The Chairman** said he understood that, after extended informal consultations, agreement had been reached on the amendments to Programme 23 (Public information) in document A/59/6 (Prog. 23).

58. **Mr. Kabtani** (Tunisia), Rapporteur, speaking as coordinator of the informal consultations on the matter, said that the members of the Committee had reached agreement during those consultations on the following amendments to document A/59/6 (Prog. 23).

59. In paragraph 23.1, the words "services, information components and regional hubs, where applicable" should be inserted after the phrase "the worldwide network of United Nations information centres". The same amendment should be repeated throughout the text wherever the United Nations

information centres were mentioned: paragraphs 23.6, 23.7 and 23.10.

60. The following new paragraph should be inserted after paragraph 23.2: "Progress will continue to be made towards rationalizing the network of United Nations information centres, in conformity with paragraph 15 of resolution 57/300, resolution 58/101 B and [draft resolution B adopted on 21 October by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee as contained in document A/59/21], with the objective of enhancing their strategic capacity and value as a key element in the Department's outreach". Following the adoption of the draft resolution at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the reference number should be inserted to replace the wording in parentheses.

61. Paragraph 23.8 should read: "In order to generate better informed public opinion on priority issues, information products for specialized media will be developed and disseminated in the official languages, as well as in local languages where possible, by United Nations information centres and services and regional hubs, where applicable. Strategic media outreach activities, such as press conferences and interviews with senior officials, will be organized. Web sites in local languages will continue to be created and maintained by the information centres and regional hubs, where applicable."

62. Under the heading "Legislative mandates", the titles and symbols of documents A/57/300 and A/59/...B should be inserted (the symbol and title should be added after the adoption of the draft resolution by the General Assembly).

63. **The Chairman** said that, if he heard no objection, he would inform the President of the General Assembly that, in addition to the amendments indicated in draft resolution B, entitled "United Nations public information policies and activities", adopted by the Committee on 21 October, the Committee had decided to make the aforementioned further amendments.

64. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.